

February 1999

Biz of Acq-Libraries, Outsourcing, and Integrated Library Systems: Peaceful Coexistence or Contradiction in Terms?

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Recommended Citation

Neville, Shelley and Richards, Rob (1999) "Biz of Acq-Libraries, Outsourcing, and Integrated Library Systems: Peaceful Coexistence or Contradiction in Terms?," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 35.

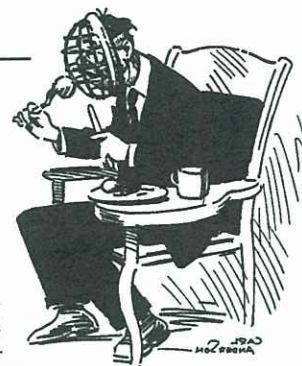
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3741>

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Biz of Acq — Libraries, Outsourcing, and Integrated Library Systems: Peaceful Coexistence, or Contradiction in Terms?

by **Shelley Neville** (formerly Library Systems Analyst, Product Engineering, Ameritech Library Services) <sin@amlibs.com>

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Column Editor's Note: *Integrated library systems (ILS) have the potential to improve significantly the productivity and efficiency of acquisitions work. Yet some libraries have only begun to explore this potential. One reason for their hesitancy may lie in the complexity of the work involved in implementing a new automated process: libraries often must cooperate with ILS vendors and materials vendors, in order to realize the possibilities of their local automated systems. In this month's column, Shelley Neville of Ameritech Library Systems sheds positive light on these challenges. She offers examples of successful partnerships between libraries, ILS vendors, and materials vendors to build better acquisitions services. In addition, she provides candid explanations of the challenges that face ILS vendors as they attempt to develop even better tools for acquisitions work. — RR*

In my previous position at **Ameritech Library Services**, I was a library systems analyst in product engineering. My area of expertise was acquisitions. One of the benefits of this job was the opportunity I had to work with materials vendors such as **Baker & Taylor**, **Brodart**, and **Ingram** developing interfaces between their products and the **Dynix** and **Horizon** systems. I loved this part of the job and learned much about what an automated system could do to make the lives of acquisitions librarians easier. To me, it seemed critical that there be a three-way dialog among the library, the materials vendor, and the automated system.

Exploring what librarians think of outsourcing and integrated library systems

Over the past few years, as I have attended various and assorted outsourcing conferences and ALA sessions on outsourcing, I have been puzzled by what I consider the dearth of information regarding outsourcing and automated systems. And as example, I attended an ALA pre-conference on outsourcing a few years ago. It was an interesting conference with lots of good information regarding how to choose a materials vendor, how to determine if outsourcing is cost effective, and how to measure the benefits (if any) of

outsourcing. After the day-long conference, I went up to two of the presenters and asked them what they thought an integrated library system could do to make the whole outsourcing process easier. Their answer surprised me: they said they couldn't think of anything.

I've thought a lot about that since then, and as I've attended other meetings about outsourcing, I've noticed that there still hasn't been a lot of discussion regarding outsourcing and integrated library systems. For this column, I sent out a survey on **ACQNET**¹ asking a variety of questions regarding librarians' current outsourcing practices. I received a total of six questionnaires back. Because of this limited response, I began to wonder about how librarians view the role of an ILS in their everyday tasks. After talking to several acquisitions librarians, I discovered that most librarians view their integrated library system simply as a tool. Whether the ILS works well or not does not prevent library personnel from performing the tasks of selection, purchasing, and processing. The ILS can either slow them down, or increase productivity.

These conversations indicated to me a need to communicate more with librarians about the ways in which ILS services can improve productivity in acquisitions.

Areas where an Integrated Library System (ILS) can help

1. The ability to load selection records directly into a purchase order or selection list.

These selection records can contain reviews or table of contents. Because the record is loaded into the local system, the librarian doesn't have to type in individual records for orders.

2. The ability to load fully cataloged records with item level information. These fully cataloged records overlay the short vendor records based on library defined criteria. Reviews and/or tables of contents may or may

not be retained. Item records with library specific information such as call number, collection, and borrowing information along with a barcode are created at the time the cataloged record is loaded.

3. The ability to transmit electronic purchase orders thus avoiding postage and printer costs. The vendor receives the purchase order the same day it was sent, and can immediately return an acknowledgment indicating the status of the order.

4. The ability to transmit electronic purchase orders with item level information. This allows the materials vendor to build the appropriate item level record. If the library receives shelf-ready materials, when the items arrive at the library along with the catalog and item records, the items are ready to be checked into the automated system.

Many materials vendors have developed Web-based selection tools such as **Yankee Book Peddler's GOBI**, **Ingram's IPAGE**, **Blackwell's Collection Manager**, **Baker & Taylor's Title Source II**, and many others. These are great ways for selectors to determine what to purchase. Selectors can search the Web site, find the titles they are interested in, mark them, add order information such as fund codes and quantity, and save them to a file. These records are in a MARC format that can have additional information such as

table of contents or reviews.

The ability to load MARC records into a local system is common across all ILS vendors. If **Brodart** can output selection records in a MARC format, then chances

are very good that the ILS vendor does not have to develop a unique interface for **Yankee**, **Ingram**, **Baker & Taylor**, or any other vendor. Where ILS vendors seem to vary is in what the system is able to do with the data once it has been loaded. **Innovative Interfaces**, **Ameritech Library Services**, **Dynix**,

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"Is it possible for selection to become a more cooperative activity between vendors and bibliographic utilities, with local review varying according to local requirements?"

and Endeavor's Voyager can download these records directly into a purchase order. **Innovative Interfaces** has the added capability for librarians to encode order information in the MARC record that is mapped to fields in the INNOPAC purchase order. Selectors or bibliographers can make decisions on the vendor's Web-based product, add ordering information, and save these records to a file. The acquisitions department simply loads these records into the acquisitions system, reviews them, adds any missing information, and generates the purchase orders.

If selection is done centrally, the **Dynix** system has the ability to load vendor formatted selection lists via FTP. This load creates library-defined selection lists that are available as a resource to individuals outside of the acquisitions department. From the reference desk, selectors can look over a list, indicate that their location would like a copy, and add any comments or funding information. The acquisitions department can also determine when a selection list is closed. When a list is closed, selectors can no longer access the list, and the acquisitions department can quickly create purchase orders for the approved titles.

The promise of partnerships

One of the key pieces in developing automation products that give acquisitions librarians better tools for managing day to day processes, is the partnership between the library, materials vendor, and the systems vendor. In an article in *Library Resources & Technical Services*, Morris, Rebarcak, and Rowley state: "If acquisitions is to move to the second stage of technological adaptation, local system enhancements are not sufficient. Bibliographic utilities, book vendors, and librarians need to forge alliances to enhance cooperative activities and reduce duplicative activities; such a process would be similar to what has happened with cataloging."² I see this happening more and more.

I was able to work in one of these partnerships with **Anaheim Public Library** and **Brodart**. We developed a process so that the library could send orders electronically to **Brodart** using a modified **BISAC (Book Industry Systems Advisory Committee)** purchase order format that included distribution information. **Brodart** was then able to fill the order, and, along with the physical items, send a disk of cataloged MARC records for each item ordered. Each MARC record featured a 949 tag which included a barcode, a library-defined call number, and other circulation information. These records overlaid the short records used in acquisitions. The library had the option to determine what match points they wanted to use. To ensure an accurate match, the unique bibliographic number (BIB key) was included in the modified BISAC

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record, so that **Brodart** could then include this number in a 035 tag to use as the match point.

Another good example of a successful partnership is one that was developed between **Blackwell's**, the **University of Nevada, Reno Library**, and **Innovative Interfaces** that allows the library to use **Blackwell's Collection Manager** as a selection and ordering tool. **Blackwell's Collection Manager** is a Web service that allows libraries to set up profiles that focus on a specific subject area of interest. Selectors use **Collection Manager** to review the bibliographic details of titles and can select titles to acquire. Acquisitions staff

use **Collection Manager** to review selectors' requests and either approve or reject them. Ordering information is stored in MARC tags and sub-fields and exported to a file. Staff use the **INNOPAC Bib Loader** to load these records, which automatically generate orders in the INNOPAC system.³

Where we need to go, and why we aren't moving as fast as you'd like

In the past few years since I attended my first outsourcing workshop, a lot of progress has been made. More and more partnerships between systems vendors, libraries, and materials vendors have been developed. For ex-

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ample, materials vendors are outputting selection records in the standard MARC format, which makes it easier for systems vendors' MARC loaders to accommodate. Moreover, there are many areas in which an automated system can help libraries.

Morris, Rebarcak, and Rowley have indicated several key areas in which vendors' products and services need further development. They ask, "Can bibliographic utilities and vendors develop new products that change local selection responsibilities? Is it possible for selection to become a more cooperative activity between vendors and bibliographic utilities, with local review varying according to local requirements? Is it possible to profile the automatic receipt of most materials so collection development can focus on newly emerging areas and on maintaining collections where a university mission requires uniqueness or unusual breadth?"⁴

If it appears that development is slow in these areas, there are a couple of reasons for this. First, automation vendors, just like libraries, have limited resources. Development priorities are established using a variety of means, such as customer input, market demands, and contractual requirements. Unfortunately, acquisitions doesn't get nearly the publicity that public services does, so acquisitions development priorities are somewhat lower in the

queue, if they make it into the queue at all.

Another reason is that automation vendors try to avoid developing proprietary interfaces with a variety of vendors. This is why the use of standards is so critical. When materials vendors ask me if the Dynix or Horizon system can load their selection records, the first thing I ask them is, "Are the records in MARC format?"

If the answer is yes, then we can handle the records. At other times I'm asked if we have the ability to send electronic orders. If the vendors can accommodate the BISAC, X12, or EDIFACT purchase order formats, then we can send electronic orders. Yet there will be times when the standard doesn't quite meet the needs of the library, or when there is one esoteric piece of data that the library cannot live without. In these cases, vendors often take the liberty of changing the standard. Ameritech Library Services did this with the BISAC format.

Other systems vendors include non-bibliographic data in the MARC record. Whenever systems or materials vendors mess around with standards, it means proprietary interfaces. Proprietary interfaces mean additional development resources, which cost money. To avoid these extra costs,

"Unfortunately, acquisitions doesn't get nearly the publicity that public services does, so acquisitions development priorities are somewhat lower in the queue, if they make it into the queue at all."

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acceptance. The language of licenses should always state "reasonable" rather than "all" as a good middle ground.

Product access as it is affected by technology (such as IP addresses) is defined. Users must be defined clearly and any prohibited categories (such as alumni) should be specified. It is better to state who is allowed to access the information by defining users, rather than by geographic terms (such as "site") which are not easily applied.

Rather than require a license for a trial, it was recommended to use a brief click-wrap license stating the limitation of liability. Authorized uses determine what is allowed in terms of copies in print or electronic form and for what applications, such as course reserves and interlibrary loan.

Legal terms and conditions

"Identifying the parties" includes specifying who has the right to sign for an institution (can a faculty member commit the entire university or just their department?) "Warranties and disclaimers" address performance

of the product. The preferred "Indemnity clause" holds both parties harmless "to the extent permitted by law".

In case of a "breach of agreement", it is a good idea for publishers to allow the institution thirty days to fix the problem. This may not be possible on the international scene where there are more cases of abuse. Since most state institutions will not agree to jurisdiction of another state, it is best to indicate the library's state or omit the clause altogether.


Business terms and conditions

Libraries can control access and educate their users but not control "all use." The terms must be stated in a way that the library can actually enforce the agreement. For example, libraries can only act on violations of the contract "of which they become aware."

Publishers need to be aware of the libraries' commitment to patron confidentiality. If the license requires copyright statements on printouts, language should be provided as part

libraries can participate in standards organizations to help define standards which meet the needs of most of the library community.

Properly implemented, automation can make a positive difference

I've come to grips with the fact that library acquisitions work isn't merely an automated systems module. It is a complicated set of processes that require a lot of human intervention. Automation can make these processes easier, faster, and less costly, when the automated system is successfully integrated into the library's work life. By cooperating with librarians and materials vendors to develop interfaces to automate many acquisitions functions, we can improve overall acquisitions performance, and ultimately save the time and money of library users. Such improvements can also free up library personnel to attend to other, more challenging tasks, and to develop additional skills in their profession. 

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¹ ACQNET-L@LISTSERV.APPSTATE.EDU.

² Morris, Dilys E., Pamela Rebarcak, and Gordon Rowley, "Monographs Acquisitions: Staffing Costs and the Impact of Automation." *Library Resources and Technical Services* 40 no. 4 (October 1998): 315.

³ Redman, Eric, Virginia Scheschy. "Blackwell's Collection Manager and the INNOPAC MARC Loader. Tools for Designing Efficient Acquisitions Workflows." <http://www.blackwell.com/services/CM/cmiiipaper.html>.

⁴ Morris, "Monographs Acquisitions," 315.

of the header/footers for each page. A reasonable time should be allowed for payment of invoices and any interest or late fees need to be stipulated in the contract. Actual content should be clearly stated as well indicating which volumes/issues are included and for what time frame.

Termination clauses that are reciprocal are preferred. To avoid unexpected cancellations, require a renewal notification no more than sixty days in advance.

Conclusion

The goal of this workshop was to streamline the process for everyone by developing licenses that meet the needs of both parties from the start. Negotiating licenses consumes a tremendous amount of time for both the library and the publisher. Workshops such as this one remove some of the mystery around licensing and increase the efficiency of the process.

Inquiries about possible dates for future ARL workshops can be addressed to Mary Case (marycase@arl.org or (202) 296-3296). 